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Baker-Polito Administration Welcomes New Southcoast Employers To Participate In MA STEM@WORK Program Connecting High School Students To STEM Internships

Initiative addresses skills gap and is developing future workforce to fuel rapidly growing innovation economy in New Bedford and Massachusetts

New Bedford – The Baker-Polito Administration today announced five new Southcoast companies – Southcoast Health System, Siemens, Lockheed Martin, HTP Inc., and Five Star Companies – that have signed on to participate in MA STEM@Work, an expanded initiative of the Governor's STEM Council, to connect high school students to science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) internships across the Commonwealth. The announcement came during a MA STEM@Work event at Five Star Companies headquarters in New Bedford, a firm that provides high quality instrument manufacturing, maintenance and repair services to hospitals and surgeons.

"Massachusetts' innovation economy is one of the fastest growing in the nation, and we often hear about the need for more workers skilled in STEM fields from companies across the state," **said Massachusetts Governor Charlie Baker**. "We are thrilled that major Southcoast employers are stepping up to the plate to help provide critical career preparation for students and build a deeper pipeline of talent for the New Bedford area workforce."

The Massachusetts STEM Advisory Council, which is co-chaired by Representative Kennedy, Lieutenant Governor Karyn Polito, and Jeffrey Leiden, M.D., Ph.D., Chairman, President and CEO of Vertex, recently identified four priority areas to advance STEM education in the Commonwealth. This includes expanding work-based learning opportunities in STEM fields by building a stronger network of employers offering career exploration and career immersion experiences to high school students, including job shadowing and paid internships.

"Expanding work-based learning opportunities for high school students across the Commonwealth is a high priority for the STEM Advisory Council, and we are excited that so many Massachusetts employers are eager to be a part of the MA STEM@WORK initiative," **said Massachusetts Lieutenant Governor Karyn Polito**.

"From advanced manufacturing to health care to clean energy, the South Coast is an essential engine in our Commonwealth's innovation economy," **said Congressman Joe Kennedy III, honorary co-chair of the Massachusetts STEM Advisory Council**. "Through MA STEM@Work these leading businesses are tapping into a dedicated and determined local workforce and ensuring they have the skills they need to power future growth throughout the region."

The STEM Advisory Council is working with the Massachusetts School to Career Connecting Activities system to identify and develop STEM internship opportunities. The goal is to place more high school students in STEM internships by Spring and Summer 2017.

"The skills connected to science, engineering, technology, and math are often cultivated during high school, and that's why we are asking Massachusetts employers to consider hiring these school students for a STEM internship," **said Massachusetts Secretary of Education Jim Peyser**. "The MA STEM@WORK program is so critical because connects Massachusetts businesses with our high school students, giving students exposure to STEM careers."

"It's vital that high school students have the opportunity to experience the diversity of career options possible in the innovation economy, a sector that is growing in New Bedford and across the region," **said New Bedford Superintendent of Schools Pia Durkin**. "We know that providing more young people with hands-on work experience is crucial to encouraging these students to pursue further STEM education and careers."

During the next decade, the President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology estimates that U.S. industries will need one million more STEM graduates than the system is expected to produce. Despite the need, the U.S. Department of Education estimates that just 1 in 6 high school seniors are proficient in math and interested in pursuing STEM higher education or careers.

Given this challenge, Massachusetts is working to connect high school students to internships at companies of all sizes across the Commonwealth. The Connecting Activities system, which features dedicated staff who work with companies and high schools, provides assistance and support to businesses throughout the internship process.

"The New Bedford region has the chance to grow and provide more opportunities to our young people," **said Anthony R. Sapienza, Chair of the Greater New Bedford Workforce Investment Board and President and COO of Joseph Abboud Manufacturing Corporation**. "That's why the MA STEM@WORK initiative is so important. We're pleased to see that so many Southcoast companies are interested in working with the region's high school students to promote STEM careers."

"Providing high school students with the opportunity to experience the type of job that can result from pursuing a strong science, technology, engineering and math education is vital," **said David Cabral, CEO of Five Star Companies.** "At Five Star, we work hard to provide hospitals with the instruments they need to enhance patient care, and it's this type of impact and opportunity high school students can achieve with a STEM internship."

More than 10,000 students worked with Commonwealth businesses last year, learning new skills and achieving greater career awareness and preparation. Several hundred of these placements were STEM-related, and the Council is looking to increase internship opportunities in these fields.

"As the largest employer in Southeastern Massachusetts, we understand the importance of developing talented workers in STEM fields," **said David DeJesus, Jr., Senior Vice President of Human Resources for Southcoast Health.** "Our health system believes in investing in education, and we are excited that this program will provide hands-on experience for talented students across the region."

Since 2014, more than 250 STEM businesses from every region have hosted close to 1,000 high school interns a year.

"Skilled workers are critical for companies like ours to stay competitive on a national and international scale," **said David Maher, Manager of Quality and Project Engineering of Undersea Systems at Lockheed Martin and Chairman of the New Bedford Area Chamber of Commerce Board.** "As a company, we believe in working within the community to provide economic and educational opportunities. We're pleased to be a part of the MA STEM@WORK initiative, because it allows us to give back to the region while cultivating our future workforce."

Siemens has a strong presence in Massachusetts, and recently announced expansion at its healthcare manufacturing site in Walpole that will add hundreds of jobs. Its Building Technologies Division has several projects with the City of New Bedford, and will be hosting high school interns for the first time starting June 2017. "Siemens is excited to be growing in the New Bedford region. As we explore innovative approaches to address energy production and sustainability efforts in the area, we're also thrilled to highlight the important work we are doing with high school students in New Bedford and surrounding communities," **said Dana Rasmussen, Northeast General Manager for Building Performance and Sustainability of the Siemens Building Technologies Division.** "We're thrilled to be a part of the MA STEM@WORK initiative and we're looking forward to working with these interns this summer."

More than 50 companies across the Southcoast are currently providing internship opportunities in STEM fields to high school students, including City of New Bedford-Management Information Systems Department, Tegra Medical, City of New Bedford Emergency Medical Services, Naval Undersea Warfare Center, Southcoast Hospitals Group Brain and Spine Center, Marine Safety Consultants, Sea Lab, UMass Dartmouth's School for Marine Science & Technology (SMAST) - Center for Marine Science Technology, Alden Court Nursing Care and Rehabilitation Center, and Nye Lubricants Inc.

To learn more or to participate, please contact Blair Brown, staff director at the STEM Advisory Council, at Blair.Brown@state.ma.us

About the STEM Advisory Council

The vision of the STEM Advisory Council is to ensure all students in the Commonwealth receive comprehensive STEM education from highly-qualified educators so they are better informed and prepared to pursue post-secondary degrees or careers in these areas. Members of the Council include individuals from academia, business, government and non-profits who are well positioned to provide elevated awareness to the benefits of a STEM literate and skilled citizenry ready to fill the ranks of the 21st Century workforce. Building on earlier initiatives, the Governor's Advisory Council on STEM is now authorized by Section 218 of Chapter 6 of Massachusetts General Law. For more information, please visit <http://www.mass.edu/stem/home.asp>

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